

## Another Sordid CIA Mess ◊ By Richard Starnes



THE CIA scandals make a melancholy and ever-expanding dossier, and one that the nation must deal with in time.

The latest known episode was revealed by Lee Kuan Yew, the able and respected prime minister of Singapore, who charged that in 1960 the Central Intelligence Agency offered him \$3 million to forget about an American spook whom Singapore security police had captured infilante delicto.

(Bear in mind thruout this recital that the \$3 million, and \$33 million more that will be alluded to shortly, are dollars squeezed out of old Sucker Comearly, specimen American drudge, taxpayer and uncritical patriot. Bear in mind also that no man on earth outside the huge, headstrong espionage apparatus will ever know how many times the CIA has actually paid bribes of similar magnitude, simply because there is no effective check on the tremendous sums it spends.)

Prime Minister Lee is an honest man, and a witness whose account will be accepted by all knowledgeable persons, even as our own State Department finally had to admit its accuracy. Mr. Lee angrily turned down the proffered corruption, but agreed to accept \$33 million in economic aid instead. He was, as he explained in an interview with British and Australian correspondents, compelled to suppress the story anyway, since it would have hurt Singapore's chances of joining the Malaysian Federation.

The terrible significance of disasters such as the one Mr. Lee describes is to be found in the reaction of every sensible foreigner. The intelligent world, and particularly that part of it now attempting to emerge from colonialism, hates and fears the CIA. Mr. Lee's reaction is typical:

"If the Americans and not the British had been in charge in Singapore and Malaya before independence, I would have been in jail, probably tortured and died a commie."

"I think they (Americans) are a highly intelligent, well-meaning people and some of their leaders, like Kennedy, have had signs of growing greatness and depth, but by and large the American administration lacks the depth and judgment and wisdom which comes out of an accumulation of knowledge over a long period."

"The Americans don't understand the overseas Chinese. They don't understand the Vietnamese. That's why there is such a mess there."

This is no lunatic revolutionary speaking. Mr. Lee is Cambridge-educated and an anti-communist. It is impossible to estimate what the ultimate cost of his estrangement from the United States will be. In the same interview Mr. Lee made it bluntly plain that Singapore would never become an American base, should economic realities compel the British to withdraw. Like so many sophisticated Asians, the man has learned a profound distrust for the poisonous antics of the CIA.

The unpleasant truth about CIA is that it is organically irresponsible. Congress docilely votes it unlimited money, and thereupon exercises no effective rehn upon how the money is spent. Given the messianic zeal which infects the CIA, it takes no prodigies of insight to understand that the thundering abuses that have come to the surface must be only a modest percentage of those that have actually taken place.

President Truman, in whose administration the CIA came into being, took what precautions he could to insure that the spy agency would not become, in his words, "a Gestapo." But a year ago he warned that the agency had strayed far outside its planned scope, had pre-empted policy-making functions in many cases, and needed to be curbed.

No realist can argue against him. The image of the stupid, arrogant, power-hungry American that is abroad in the world is almost exclusively a CIA creation, and it is one that the country can't afford.